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> [News](#) > [Editorial](#)

[Print this Page](#)

[<<-back to story](#)

BLP raise unjustified

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My thanks to The Mining Journal for covering the \$25,000 pay raise granted by the Marquette Board of Light and Power to the executive director, Kirby Juntila. Without such coverage significant events such as these might otherwise go unnoticed.

I am furious the MBLP board granted a \$19,000 salary, plus \$6,000 vehicle allowance increase (22.9 percent) for a combined annual income of \$134,000. Folks, this is Marquette, not the big city. I don't believe Juntila was threatening to leave because his meager salary of \$109,000 was too small. And what if he did leave? Don't you think there would be any number of candidates who would love to work and live here for his old salary? Thomas Humphrey said in his opinion Juntila is above average. Well, opinion doesn't do it for me. For that amount of salary increase, his performance should be beyond excellent. I have seen nothing to support that. On the contrary!

This increase was based on a survey of peers across the country. How many of us common folk can go to our employers and say we need a huge increase in salary because our peers across the country are making more money? Or get a parachute clause that pays a year's salary (\$128,000) if terminated without cause?

I feel four of the five directors (Chuck Wanberg dissented) were fiscally irresponsible in representing the interest of city residents and tax and utility payers in granting this raise. This unbelievable increase is a slap in our face at a time when our economy is in a sharp downturn and the average person is struggling to pay bills. And this while the MBLP is pushing for a rate increase! If you see any of the board members Humphrey, Piirila, Goodney, and Stien, give them an earful, but thank Wanberg. Remember this raise next election in November.

It seems to me the MBLP Board and management consider themselves to be a community power company, and not a wholly owned subsidiary of the city of Marquette, which they are.

D. Joseph Buys

Marquette

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